

Sam Malik

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Tēnā koe Sam

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00201972

Thank you for your email on 25 March 2026, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

I am requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 regarding the recent IT systems outage that affected hospital operations across New Zealand in or around January 2026.

- 1. The exact timeline of the outage, including start time, duration, and full restoration of services*
- 2. A list of all hospitals, regions, and services affected*
- 3. Any internal assessments of the impact on patient care, including delays, cancellations, or adverse events*
- 4. Copies of any internal reports, risk registers, or briefings from January 2024 to January 2026 that identified risks relating to:*
 - a. IT system resilience*
 - b. infrastructure failure*
 - c. reliance on third-party vendors*
- 5. Any documents or communications indicating prior warnings about the likelihood of a major outage*
- 6. Information on staffing levels within IT and digital services over the same period, including:*
 - a. total headcount changes*
 - b. any reductions, restructures, or hiring freezes*
- 7. Any internal analysis of how staffing levels may affect system reliability or incident response capability*
- 8. The names of all third-party vendors involved in the affected systems*
- 9. Copies of relevant service level agreements (SLAs) and performance reports relating to uptime and incident response*
- 10. Any internal or external reviews of vendor performance following the outage*
- 11. Copies of any incident review, root cause analysis, or independent investigation reports*
- 12. Any recommendations made and timelines for implementation*
- 13. Briefings provided to the Minister of Health relating to the outage*
- 14. Copies of current contingency plans for IT system failures in hospitals*
- 15. Any evaluations of how those plans performed during the outage*

Response

For clarity, I will address each of your questions in turn.

- 1. The exact timeline of the outage, including start time, duration, and full restoration of services*

There was no single national IT outage during January 2026. Health NZ has interpreted this part of your request as referring to significant network outages during January 2026 that affected hospital operations. The relevant outages are outlined below.

- **13 - 14 January 2026 - Southern inter-connectivity network outage:** A third-party hardware failure caused a network outage impacting a range of clinical systems across Te Waipounamu. Systems were progressively restored from the time of the incident at 3.21am on 13 January through to complete restoration by 3.31pm on 14 January.
- **15 January 2026 - Central IT outage:** A central IT outage occurred, with full system restoration by 4:15pm on the day.
- **22 January 2026 - Southern outage:** The outage started early Wednesday morning, and the system was restored before 9.30am on the same day.
- **28 - 29 January 2026, Northern IT outage:** The outage lasted approximately 12 hours, with services restored to all impacted hospitals in the early hours of the following morning.

2. *A list of all hospitals, regions, and services affected*

The significant network outages during January 2026 affected hospitals and services across the following regions:

- **Southern region:** Dunedin Hospital, Invercargill Hospital, and Lakes District Hospital.
- **Central region:** Wellington Regional Hospital, Hutt Hospital, and Wairarapa Hospital.
- **Northern region:** Hospitals and services within Te Tai Tokerau, Waitematā, Auckland, and Counties Manukau districts.

Across these regions, the outages affected a range of clinical, diagnostic, and operational hospital services.

3. *Any internal assessments of the impact on patient care, including delays, cancellations, or adverse events*

Health NZ does not maintain formal internal assessment or review documents relating to patient care impacts from the January 2026 outages. While local incident and IT logs were created as part of routine operational processes, these do not constitute internal assessments of patient care impact.

Therefore, your request for information is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as this information is not held.

4. *Copies of any internal reports, risk registers, or briefings from January 2024 to January 2026 that identified risks relating to:*
1. *IT system resilience*
 2. *infrastructure failure*
 3. *reliance on third-party vendors*

Internal reports, briefings, and risk registers are created for a wide range of operational and governance purposes and are held across multiple business units, districts, and systems. They are not centrally held or categorised by reference to the specific risk themes you have described.

To determine what documents may have existed during the period January 2024 to January 2026, and whether they identified the risks specified, would require a substantial manual review of a large volume of material across multiple systems across our Districts and National Office. This would unreasonably interfere with our operations. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Refining or extending the request would not reasonably reduce the effort required to locate and assess potentially relevant information, as there is no central set of documents addressing the

risks specified across the period, and any attempt to identify such material would require the same substantial review.

While we are unable to identify and provide documents based on the broad risk themes outlined above, we have provided other information within our response that explains, at a high level, how Health NZ responds to system outages and related risks.

5. Any documents or communications indicating prior warnings about the likelihood of a major outage

Health NZ does not hold documents or communications warning of the definite likelihood of a major outage occurring in January 2026. Most IT outages are unplanned and arise unexpectedly, for example due to hardware failure, software faults, or third-party service disruption. As such, Health NZ generally does not receive advance notice that an outage will occur on a particular day.

Where planned system maintenance is scheduled, this is managed through routine operational communications; however, the outages experienced in January 2026 were not events for which advance warnings of definite occurrence were held.

Accordingly, your request for information is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as this information is not held.

6. Information on staffing levels within IT and digital services over the same period, including:
a. total headcount changes
b. any reductions, restructures, or hiring freezes

Health NZ has interpreted this part of your request at a high level, as staffing data over the period January 2024 to January 2026 is not held as a fixed snapshot.

As at 25 March 2026, our current Digital Services workforce comprises of a headcount of 1,460 roles, including 162 vacancies that we are actively recruiting to. Before the Data and Digital change process in May 2025, 1,412 people were employed, excluding transfers and vacancies.

7. Any internal analysis of how staffing levels may affect system reliability or incident response capability

Health NZ does not hold formal internal analysis that specifically examines how staffing levels within IT and digital services affect system reliability or incident response capability. While staffing considerations may be referenced in a general or contextual way within operational or governance material, no analysis of the type described in your request exists.

Accordingly, your request for information is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as this information is not held.

8. The names of all third-party vendors involved in the affected systems
9. Copies of relevant service level agreements (SLAs) and performance reports relating to uptime and incident response

Health NZ relies on a range of vendors to support and maintain complex national digital and infrastructure systems. The names of third party vendors involved in the affected systems, along with copies of external service level agreements (SLAs) and associated performance reports are withheld under section 9(2)(b)(ii) of the OIA, to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

10. Any internal or external reviews of vendor performance following the outage

Health NZ does not hold internal or external analysis of vendor performance regarding the January outages. Accordingly, your request for information is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as this information is not held.

11. Copies of any incident review, root cause analysis, or independent investigation reports

The documents you have requested contain detailed information about system vulnerabilities, incident response processes, and risk controls within Health NZ's digital systems. Disclosure of this information could increase the risk of further disruption or compromise, impacting the safe and reliable delivery of health services. Therefore, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(c) of the OIA, as disclosure would be likely to prejudice measures protecting the health and safety of the public.

12. Any recommendations made and timelines for implementation

Health NZ holds draft information as described following the January 2026 outages. This forms part of an internal report that is currently being finalised.

Therefore, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

13. Briefings provided to the Minister of Health relating to the outage

Health NZ has not provided any formal briefings to the Ministers of Health relating to the significant IT outages in January 2026. Therefore, your request for this information is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA as this information does not exist.

14. Copies of current contingency plans for IT system failures in hospitals

The information you have requested contains detailed information about Health NZ's arrangements for maintaining and restoring critical services during IT system disruptions. Therefore, this information is withheld under section 9(2)(c) of the OIA, as disclosure would be likely to prejudice measures protecting the health and safety of the public.

15. Any evaluations of how those plans performed during the outage

Health NZ does not prepare formal evaluations of business continuity or outage response plans following every IT outage. Reviews are undertaken on a risk and severity basis, and for lower impact outages learnings are addressed through operational processes rather than a standalone evaluation document.

Accordingly, your request for information is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as this information is not held.

Where we have withheld information under section 9(2) of the OIA, we have considered any countervailing public interests in the release of this information. We do not believe that the public interests outweigh the need to withhold in this instance.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@tewhatoru.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew McLay', is positioned above the printed name.

Matthew McLay

**Manager Government Services
Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora**